

NEWS RELEASE

Public Information From:

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EMERGENCY AGENCY RELEASES COUNTYWIDE EXTREME HEAT PLAN

(COLUMBUS, OHIO) – Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security (FCEM&HS) has partnered with local jurisdictions and agencies to create a plan for a coordinated countywide response to an extreme heat emergency in the county. The plan was issued today and will be updated as needed.

Specifics of the plan include how the public will be informed during a heat emergency; how local government jurisdictions, agencies and other organizations will maximize and coordinate countywide emergency resources specific to extreme heat; and how they will work to avoid duplication of effort and build response capabilities, said FCEM&HS Director Michael R. Pannell. The plan can be viewed online at www.franklincountyohio.gov/emahs.

“This effort is a prime example of coordinated emergency planning working as it should,” Pannell said, adding that it is a direct result of Columbus Public Health officials who approached him with the idea to write the plan after FCEM&HS updated the county’s official risk assessment earlier this year.

Extreme heat is new to the list of hazards in the recently completed 2010 Risk Assessment for Franklin County and is the No. 1 non-severe-weather-related killer in the U.S., according to the National Weather Service. The July 2006 North American heat wave killed more than 200 people nationwide, and at least half of the victims were elderly. Other vulnerable populations include infants and young children, pregnant women, and persons with mental or chronic illness.

The Franklin County Extreme Heat Plan outlines tasks to be performed by – and coordinated among – FCEM&HS, the Columbus and Franklin County local public health departments, American Red Cross, Central Ohio Trauma System, Franklin County Office on Aging, Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging, HandsOn Central Ohio, American Electric Power, Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission, Educational Council, Central Ohio Poison Control, Columbus Division of Fire and other fire departments across the county, Columbus Division of Police, Life Care Alliance, The Breathing Association, Columbus Public Utilities, Columbus Recreation and Parks Department, Columbus Department of Public Service, and the National Weather Service.

Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security is a local government agency which coordinates county-wide emergency/disaster planning, education, warning, response and recovery to minimize the adverse impact of emergencies and disasters on area residents and property.